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Operational activities for development: South-South cooperation for development

Letter dated 21 October 2009 from the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the Seventh ALBA Summit, held in the city of Cochabamba, Plurinational State of Bolivia, on 17 October 2009.

The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reaffirms its commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and considers the latter to be the multilateral forum par excellence for addressing the challenges facing the international community.

In this context, I have the honour to attach a copy of the Final Declaration of the Seventh ALBA-TCP Summit (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter distributed as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 58 (b).

(*Signed*) Jorge **Valero**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 21 October 2009 from the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Declaration of the Seventh Summit of the Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América — Tratado Comercial de los Pueblos (ALBA-TCP) (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America — Peoples' Trade Agreement)

Cochabamba, Bolivia, 17 October 2009

The Heads of State and Government of the countries members of the Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América — Tratado de Comercio de los Pueblos (ALBA-TCP) (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America — Peoples' Trade Agreement), on the occasion of their Seventh Summit, held in the city of Cochabamba, Plurinational State of Bolivia, on 17 October 2009, and of the fifth anniversary of the founding of ALBA, emphasize its constitution as a political, economic and social alliance to defend the sovereignty, self-determination and identity of peoples and as a message that a better world is possible.

ALBA-TCP upholds the principles of international law, in particular respect for sovereignty, self-determination of peoples, the right to development, territorial integrity, the promotion of social justice and international peace, as well as the rejection of aggression, the threat or use of force, foreign interference and unilateral coercive measures against developing countries.

ALBA-TCP promotes the principles of solidarity, cooperation, complementarity, mutual respect for the sovereignty of our countries, justice, equity, respect for cultural diversity and harmony with nature and plays a fundamental role for revolutionary and progressive processes worldwide as an alliance that promotes solidarity among the countries of the South.

Two hundred years after the first cries of liberty were heard in the Americas, the Heads of State and Government of ALBA-TCP reiterate their firm commitment to continue working for the independence, liberation, self-determination and unity demanded by the peoples of our America and the Caribbean and hereby adopt the following declaration:

I

1. By their very nature, capitalism and its principal expression, imperialism, are destroying humankind's own existence and our Mother Earth. The global economic crisis, the climate change crisis, the food crisis and the energy crisis are all structural in nature and can be blamed essentially on unsustainable patterns of production, distribution and consumption, the concentration and accumulation of capital in a few hands, the relentless, indiscriminate pillaging of natural resources, the commercialization of life and speculation at all levels for the benefit of a few.

2. The global economic crisis, which began in the developed countries and which we did not cause, is affecting the developing countries more severely, increasing poverty and unemployment. Far from seeing a funding flow from North to South, we are witnessing a growing trend towards net capital transfers from South to North.

The aim of the dominant global economic policies is not to promote human well-being but to save a handful of banks and corporations.

3. Despite its limitations, the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development, held in June of this year, demonstrated the urgent need to move ahead with building a new international economic order that is fair and equitable and that recognizes and supports the development goals of the countries of the South, such as the creation of new development mechanisms, the building of a new international financial architecture, the consolidation of an alternative international currency and the development of trade that is complementary, fair and based on solidarity.

4. The financial crisis will not be resolved by the G-8, the G-20 or other exclusive groups. The solution can only come from the G-192, as represented by the General Assembly of the United Nations, where every country has an equal voice and an equal vote. In this context, there is a need to promote the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly established to follow up the crisis.

5. The world economic crisis cannot be resolved by purely financial, regulatory, monetary or commercial measures. A structural crisis requires structural solutions. The developed countries' support for the major banks is increasing the centralization of financial sector capital in the hands of small groups, making it difficult to monitor and regulate the sector. Moreover, there is an absence of appropriate mechanisms for supervising the management of major corporations and free competition policies. For this reason, a radical overhaul is needed in the real economy and not just in the financial sphere.

6. To the world economic crisis must be added that of climate change, which is part of a wider environmental crisis affecting Mother Earth. Each year, humankind consumes a third more than the planet's capacity for regeneration. If the capitalist system continues to squander resources at this rate, two planet Earths will be needed by 2030.

7. Human beings are part of an interdependent system of plants, animals, mountains, forests, oceans and air with which they must live in harmony and balance, respecting the rights of all. In order to safeguard human rights, the rights of Mother Earth must be recognized and protected. It is therefore essential that the United Nations adopt a Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth.

8. Global warming and climate change are causing the melting and loss of glaciers, a decline in water resources and hence in sources of drinking water, drought in various regions, more frequent hurricanes and natural disasters and loss of biodiversity and human lives.

9. The developed countries owe a climate debt, part of a bigger environmental debt, to the developing countries because of their historical responsibility for emissions and because of the adaptations that we will have to make as a result of the global warming that they have caused. This climate debt must be recognized and honoured through the provisions of the current climate change regime, meaning that they must: (a) make deep cuts in their domestic emissions of greenhouse gases, based on the share of global emissions required by the developing countries to meet their economic and social development needs, eradicate poverty and realize the right to development; (b) fulfil their commitments to effective technology transfer; and (c) guarantee the provision of necessary additional resources on an appropriate,

predictable and sustainable basis, given that the developing countries' adaptation requirements have increased as a result of the environmental crisis and our countries need this climate debt to be paid if they are to take action to mitigate its effects.

10. At the United Nations Conference on Climate Change, to be held in Copenhagen at the end of this year, the developed countries must make significant commitments under the Kyoto Protocol to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adopt mechanisms for compensating countries that preserve, protect and conserve their forests.

11. The "Yasuní ITT" initiative being carried out by Ecuador is an effective voluntary measure for tackling the problem of climate change, guaranteeing the conservation of one of the most biodiverse places in the world. Under this initiative, Ecuador will forego the exploitation of 846 million barrels of petroleum deposits in the subsoil of Yasuní National Park, thereby avoiding emission into the atmosphere of the 407 million metric tons of carbon that the burning of these fossil fuels would have produced. The initiative will contribute to respect for the indigenous cultures of the peoples living in voluntary isolation in Yasuní National Park, as well as to social development, nature conservation and promotion of the use of renewable energy sources.

12. The energy crisis has been caused by the irrational consumption patterns imposed by rich countries and by monopolistic and financial speculation benefiting the big transnational corporations.

13. In order to bring about a real change in access to energy in the world, particularly in the developing countries, regional cooperation, complementation and integration efforts will have to be made in developing energy efficient models for energy generation, transmission and use, as well as in developing renewables, to ensure that the whole population has access to services.

14. Access to energy is a right of peoples that States must guarantee by strengthening their public policies, defending peoples' rights to their country's natural resources and looking for alternative energy sources, thereby ensuring conservation and development in harmony with nature.

15. The adverse impact of the food crisis on our peoples is one of the most pressing problems of the twenty-first century, demanding urgent, coordinated measures to ensure adequate and timely access to food and guarantee food sovereignty and security for the developing countries.

16. The irrational use of foodstuffs to produce biofuels is a practice that contributes to the food crisis, increases poverty, reduces forest areas and the amount of land available for meeting food needs and increases food prices and indiscriminate water use.

17. Migration is not a crime. All forms of discrimination against and criminalization of migrants must be abolished. The immigration policies of the United States Government must be amended and the European Union's directive on the return of illegal immigrants revoked as a matter of urgency, in order to halt mass deportations and round-ups, permit family reunification and remove the wall on the United States-Mexico border, which separates and divides our peoples instead of uniting us. Discriminatory and selective laws and policies that cause loss of human lives must be repealed, including the Cuban Adjustment Act and the "wet foot, dry

foot" policy applied by the United States Government to illegal immigrants from Cuba.

18. Rather than immigration policies based essentially on security that have been imposed, ironically, in countries that were built by immigrants, there must be greater dialogue and joint action among countries of origin, transit and destination of migrants, so that a comprehensive approach to migration can be adopted that focuses on human beings and on respect for their rights.

19. The Heads of State and Government express their support for the creation and strengthening of joint mechanisms that build on the progress made by the Latin American and Caribbean countries in exchanging experience and best practices for combating human trafficking, illegal migrant trafficking and sexual, labour and other forms of exploitation.

20. The impact of the global economic crisis of capitalism on the peoples and nations of the South has made South-South cooperation essential. In this context, the Conference on South-South Cooperation to be held in Kenya in December 2009 is very important.

21. Faced with the advance and growth of progressive forces and ideas in Latin America and the Caribbean, as reflected, inter alia, in the growing strength of ALBA-TCP, imperialism and right-wing forces have reacted with the coup d'état in Honduras and the installation of military bases in Colombia.

22. José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, the constitutional President of Honduras, must be reinstated immediately and unconditionally. No electoral process held under the government installed by the coup, nor any authorities emerging from that process, can be recognized by the international community. The human rights violations, detentions and deaths currently suffered by the Honduran people are growing worse as the dictatorship's delaying tactics fail and the fraudulent elections called in an attempt to consolidate its position draw near. In this context, it is essential to mount a diplomatic offensive and promote forcible action for the full restoration of the constitutional system.

23. The installation of United States military bases in Latin America and the Caribbean fosters distrust among peoples, endangers peace, threatens democracy and facilitates hegemonic interference in the region. Latin America and the Caribbean constitute a zone of peace that must be free of foreign military bases and forces that pose a threat to our peoples. The Government of Colombia must reconsider the installation of the military bases concerned. The territory illegally occupied by the United States naval base at Guantánamo must be returned unconditionally to Cuba.

24. The United States economic, commercial and financial blockade against the Republic of Cuba must be lifted unconditionally, unilaterally and immediately.

25. It is unacceptable that, in violation of international norms, various governments give refuge or asylum to individuals who do not qualify as refugees or asylum seekers under the international instruments in force and are accused of crimes against humanity and terrorism. By doing this, the governments concerned obstruct efforts to investigate the debts that the accused owe to justice.

26. Protection of cultural identity and diversity is fundamental to the struggle against neo-colonialism. Progress must therefore be made in reappraising and

decriminalizing the chewing of coca leaf and in removing coca leaf from Schedule I of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs.

27. Comprehensive, effective measures to combat drug trafficking must be taken in a context of strict respect for sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs, shared responsibility and respect for human rights, through regional and multilateral cooperative actions that root out once and for all neo-colonial practices of drug certification and decertification and abolition of trade preferences such as those applied by the United States for the purposes of political hegemony.

28. The mass media must discharge their social function with responsibility and a sense of ethics and public service for all citizens; they must not be instruments of the sectarian interests of certain minorities nor be used as means of disinformation and political destabilization.

29. The confidence-building process between Bolivia and Chile with a view to resolving Bolivia's historical demand for a sovereign outlet to the sea, in a context of brotherhood, respect and trust between two neighbouring peoples, is an effort that deserves the support of the entire international community so that it can achieve tangible results.

30. The forthcoming general elections in Bolivia on 6 December 2009 are renewed evidence of the ALBA-TCP countries' commitment to democracy, in response to anti-democratic attitudes and coup movements in Latin America and the Caribbean.

II

The Heads of State and Government of the countries members of the Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América — Tratado de Comercio de los Pueblos (ALBA-TCP) (Alliance for the Peoples of our America — Peoples' Trade Agreement) hereby agree on the following measures:

1. They agree to rename the Single Regional Payment Clearing System (SUCRE) the Unified Regional Payment Clearing System (SUCRE), which better expresses the feeling of unity and the object of the SUCRE system. To this end, they sign the Treaty setting up the Unified Regional Payment Clearing System as an instrument for achieving monetary and financial sovereignty, eliminating dependence on the United States dollar in regional trade, reducing asymmetries and gradually consolidating an economic zone of shared development. They instruct SUCRE technical committees to hold a meeting by mid-November at the latest to discuss the SUCRE implementation plan.[1]

2. They establish the fundamental principles that will govern the Peoples' Trade Agreement, in order to develop regional trade based on complementarity, solidarity and cooperation for well-being.

3. They instruct the Economic Complementation Council to set up an ALBA-TCP trade complementation working group charged with presenting a proposal for a Peoples' Trade Agreement based on the aforementioned fundamental principles.

4. They adopt the plan of action for the development of trade in the ALBA-TCP economic zone of shared development in order to expedite action in this sphere.

[1] Reservations to this paragraph entered by the Commonwealth of Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

5. They agree to create a multi-country import-export company, ALBAEXIM, as a mechanism for promoting trade complementarity among ALBA-TCP countries.

6. They agree to promote cooperation among the competent bodies of ALBA-TCP member countries with a view to the signing of an agreement on reciprocal recognition of certificates of quality for the textile and garment sector, as a means of strengthening trade among ALBA-TCP countries. They welcome the signing of an agreement between Venezuela and Bolivia.

7. They endorse continuation of the multi-country literacy and post-literacy project and the ALBAMED project, giving priority to ALBA Bank funding in order to ensure their sustainability and envisaged scope and the possible incorporation of all member countries in the near future.

8. They instruct the ALBA-TCP Ministerial Social Council to develop the different activities and projects identified in the areas of education, health, work and housing.

9. They entrust the ALBA-TCP Ministerial Social Council with working on a proposal for integrated action in health surveillance for the prevention, detection and timely control of emerging and re-emerging diseases.

10. They instruct the ALBA-TCP Ministerial Social Council to include the topics of culture and sport in its areas of competence.

11. They reiterate the decision to streamline the procedures for ratification of the Agreement on Recognition of University Qualifications in accordance with their respective domestic laws, with a view to its early implementation in ALBA-TCP member countries.

12. They welcome the creation of the ALBA-TCP Educational Publishing House, the object of which is to create facilities for the production, publication and distribution of educational texts and/or materials of common interest to the member countries in order to strengthen educational policies for the benefit of our peoples, and they entrust its coordination to Bolivia.

13. They agree to give priority and funding to the multi-country ALBA-Education project, which treats the educational system as a continuous, integrated whole and includes lines of work in the areas of basic education and university education.

14. They agree to set up a working group under the Social Programmes Council to deal with labour and social security issues, including ALBA-TCP certification of labour competencies, in order to design projects that enhance employment and working conditions by recognizing acquired training and expertise, as well as the ancestral knowledge of our peoples.

15. They urge early establishment of a ministerial committee on women and equal opportunity as a forum that will give the women of our peoples a visible, active role and ensure gender mainstreaming in all ALBA-TCP integration initiatives and instruments.

16. They agree to set up an ALBA-TCP ministerial committee for the protection of nature, meeting under the auspices of the Political Council, and entrust it with working on an ALBA-TCP environmental agenda and on the definition and implementation of the rights of Mother Earth.

17. They recommend the establishment of a group to study the creation of an international tribunal for climate justice as a mechanism for ensuring that the developed countries pay their climate debt and fulfil their commitment to reduce domestic emissions of greenhouse gases. Such a tribunal will be composed of developing country representatives, whose task it will be to prosecute those responsible for the planet's current climate crisis.

18. They agree to promote the creation and strengthening of multi-country corporations, as an innovative mechanism of the Peoples' Trade Agreement that will allow each country's capacities, expertise and strengths to be maximized, based on its potential, and will reduce asymmetries, strengthen complementarities, optimize resources and consolidate projects that contribute to structural, technological and economic development for the well-being of peoples. To that end, they call for the following measures:

- Ministers and secretaries of State for agriculture and forestry should be invited to attend the second meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Petrocaribe ALBA-Alimentos (ALBA-Food) initiative, to be held from 27 to 29 November 2009, in a location to be decided, to monitor the progress of the portfolio of projects presented to the ALBA-Alimentos technical secretariat, adopt the constituent statutes of the ALBA-Alimentos multi-country corporation and embark on the road map for establishing a multi-country forestry corporation within 90 days;

- With respect to the multi-country energy corporation, the ALBA-TCP working group on energy integration should meet within 90 days to monitor the progress of the portfolio of projects presented to the ALBA-TCP technical secretariat and, in the light of the political and legal realities of Alliance countries, to conclude negotiations on the contract establishing the multi-country corporation, its statutes and the final determination of the State corporations of each country that will be members of the multi-country corporation;

- Ministers with responsibility for mining and metallurgy should be invited to sign a commitment setting up a working group that will decide within three months on the creation of a multi-country institute, INGEOALBA, that will be an ALBA geological research, prospecting and services centre enabling our nations to create a geological map of our wealth and thereby determine the true value of our mineral wealth, and of a multi-country mining and metallurgy corporation that will develop joint plans and projects in the areas of prospecting, mining, processing, creation of added value, marketing and closure of mines, in a manner that respects humans and the environment;

- Ministers with responsibility for iron, steel and aluminium should be invited to sign commitments setting up two working groups that will decide within three months on the creation of two multi-country corporations, one for iron and steel and the other for aluminium;

- With respect to the ALBA-TCP multi-country industrial corporation Empresa Grannacional Socioproductiva Venezuela y Bolivia, a technical working group made up of representatives of ALBA-TCP member States will be established to conduct preliminary studies on the feasibility of setting up food-processing plants in Bolivia.

19. They instruct the Ministerial Economic Complementation Council, through the working group on agricultural and food sovereignty, to draw up a unified, consensus position of the member countries on food sovereignty for the forthcoming World Summit on Food Security to be held from 16 to 18 November 2009.

20. They entrust the recently constituted ALBA-TCP working group on issues of international law, self-determination, respect for sovereignty and human rights with drawing up general guidelines for the creation of a body that will contribute to the discussion and adoption of an international position based on a reformulation of these issues from an integrationist, intercultural standpoint.

21. They welcome the discussions of the meeting of the working group on settlement of disputes and, taking into account the sensitivity of this issue for our peoples, instruct it to continue its work with a view to presenting specific proposals on the subject within 30 days at Caracas, Venezuela.

22. They agree to restructure ALBA-TCP into three ministerial councils (political, economic complementation and social); committees answerable to these councils; and working groups for specific tasks. They also urge the Political Council to define the powers, functions and working procedures of the aforesaid bodies.

23. They welcome the proposals considered at the meeting of ministers of tourism on the creation of an ALBA multi-country hotel chain, a multi-country tourism training institute and a tourism development research centre, as well as the necessary impetus for continuing to improve airline connections among member countries.

24. They support efforts to create a Latin American and Caribbean organization, made up of the region's 33 independent nations, to help consolidate their political and economic independence and promote integration, cooperation and solidarity among their peoples.

25. They agree to participate actively and coordinate positions in the meetings of Foreign Ministers of the Rio Group and in the Latin American and Caribbean Summit on Integration and Development (CALC) to be held in Montego Bay, Jamaica, from 4 to 6 November 2009.

26. They give broad support to the activities of the ALBA-TCP working group on the review of industrial property law and adopt the proposal to expand the group's area of study to include the issue of intellectual property, with a view to the development of a model for the social appropriation of knowledge that will help overcome the constraints imposed by the international intellectual property regime on the production of goods essential for life.

27. They agree to promote an ALBA satellite project, designed to enable ALBA member countries to use Simón Bolívar Satellite capacity to provide rural telephone and broadband Internet services by satellite. To this end, a telecommunications commission will be established, made up of the bodies responsible for such services, to identify satellite solutions for the countries of the region, under specific programmes presented by the relevant entities in those countries, and to stipulate the conditions for obtaining Simón Bolívar Satellite landing rights and deploying land-based services.

28. They set up, as part of the Political Council, an ALBA-TCP standing committee on the sovereignty and defence of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples

of Our America, whose main objectives will be to define a comprehensive joint popular defence strategy and to set up a school for the dignity and sovereignty of the armed forces of ALBA-TCP countries.[2]

29. They instruct the Social Council to set up a working group to draft a proposal for the establishment and operation of an ALBA-TCP scientific pole as a means of pooling efforts for the autonomous development of regional science and technology capabilities, with industrial applications in pharmaceuticals production, starting with the development of Quimbiotec as a blood products processing plant for the ALBA-TCP countries.

30. They agree that the Political Council should present, through a working group, a proposal for the analysis and development of the ALBA-TCP Radio del Sur (Radio of the South) project, the creation of an ALBA-TCP news agency and the establishment of thematic channels co-produced by ALBA-TCP countries in order to promote a communication model that permits a genuine meeting among our peoples, strengthens democratic processes in the region and breaks down the communication barrier imposed by transnational media giants.

31. They instruct the Political Council to present a proposal for the creation of an ALBA television and cinema school, based on the experiences of Cuba, Venezuela and all the ALBA-TCP countries.

32. They entrust the executive secretariat with developing and maintaining a permanent portal with information on the progress, achievements and proposals of ALBA-TCP, and with ensuring the ongoing production and distribution of publications.

33. They welcome the binational Ecuador/Venezuela Media Observatory project and instruct the Political Council to take all necessary steps for the project's extension to the other ALBA-TCP member countries as a mechanism for monitoring the mass media, so that they can tackle the media war and review the legal frameworks for communication and information in their respective countries.

34. They instruct the Economic Complementation Council to set up a working group to evaluate different design alternatives for an ALBA-TCP mechanism for the management of international reserves, to be called the ALBA-TCP Reserve Fund.

35. They instruct the Social Council to promote and develop, through a working group, a programme proposal for the care and protection of people with disabilities. This programme will include, inter alia, biopsychosocial and genetic studies to determine the incidence of disability and its relationship with poverty and social exclusion. Its ultimate aim is to promote the effective integration of people with disabilities, without discrimination, into productive, economic, political, social and cultural life and to develop their individual potential.

36. They instruct the Social Council to present a project for bringing into the education systems of ALBA-TCP countries those population groups that have historically been excluded from them.

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[2] Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines enter reservations based on their membership of a Regional Security System (RSS) made up of the countries of the eastern Caribbean.

Signed at Cochabamba, Plurinational State of Bolivia, on 17 October 2009.

For the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia:
Evo **Morales Ayma**
President

For the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela:
Hugo **Chávez Frías**
President

For the Government of the Republic of Nicaragua:
Daniel **Ortega**
President

For the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:
Ralph E. **Gonsalves**
Prime Minister

For the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica:
Roosvelt **Skerrit**
Prime Minister

For the Government of Antigua and Barbuda:
Winston **Baldwin Spencer**
Prime Minister

For the Government of the Republic of Cuba:
José Ramón **Machado Ventura**
First Vice-President of the Councils of State and Ministers

For the Government of the Republic of Honduras:
Patricia **Rodas**
Minister for Foreign Affairs

For the Government of the Republic of Ecuador:
Julio **Oleas Montalvo**
Deputy Minister for Foreign Trade and Integration